



Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

P.O. Box 1766

Waterbury, Connecticut 06721

CCDLA.com

Testimony of Attorney Ioannis A. Kaloidis

Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

Raised Bill No. 467 - *An Act Concerning Municipal Implementation Of Criminal Justice Reforms*

Judiciary Public Hearing – March 23, 2016

The Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Associations is a not-for-profit organization of more than three hundred lawyers who are dedicated to defending persons accused of criminal offenses. Founded in 1988, CCDLA is the only statewide criminal defense lawyers' organization in Connecticut. An affiliate of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, CCDLA works to improve the criminal justice system by insuring that the individual rights guaranteed by the Connecticut and United States constitutions are applied fairly and equally and that those rights are not diminished.

CCDLA supports Raised Bill No. 467, *An Act Concerning Municipal Implementation of Criminal Justice Reforms*. This bill accomplishes two very important things. First, it excludes body cameras from collective bargaining agreements. Second, it prevents certain employers from requiring employees or prospective employees to disclose any criminal history until a conditional offer of employment has been made.

Body cameras serve many purposes today. They document police interaction with the public and often provide the best evidence of an arrest and the circumstances surrounding it. Recordings made with body cameras provide objective evidence that can be used in court and often helps to resolve cases by eliminating or minimizing situations where it is the word of the officer versus the word of the accused. All too often, arrests and convictions are based on nothing more than that. Many people in our society are forced to plead guilty to offenses rather than risk trial where their word will be challenged against that of a law enforcement agent.

The use of body cameras is also essential for the protection of the public from police misconduct while also protecting law enforcement from false claims of misconduct. In a time where mistrust for law enforcement has reached epic proportions, the use of body cameras and other audio and visual recording technology is of vital importance.

The proposed legislation properly removes the use of body cameras from the negotiation of police contracts. This will prevent law enforcement from using budgetary concerns as a means to circumvent their responsibility to the public to adequately document police-civilian interaction. Body cameras are absolutely necessary in order to maintain any degree of public trust in law enforcement. Accordingly, they should be removed from consideration in contract negotiations.

The proposed legislation also prevents an employer from requiring a prospective employee to disclose certain criminal history until after a conditional offer of employment has been made. The restrictions imposed by the proposed legislation are a positive change in existing law. These changes will make it easier for people with criminal histories to obtain employment. This will in turn assist such people in supporting their families

and contributing positively to society. The stigma of a criminal conviction can have a significantly detrimental effect on one's life for many years. This legislation seeks to limit such harm.

CCDLA supports Raised Bill 467 and urges the committee to act favorably upon it.